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LINDBERGH'S MEDAL

The malicious attack on Brig. Gen. Charles A. Lindbergh occasioned by his being decorated with a Nazi medal has now been exposed in all its injustice. It was said by those given to attacking the great flyer that, if he accepted a Hitler medal, he must be a Hitlerite, and this line was used to account for the fact that he opposed American entry into World War II.

Now it develops that Col. Truman Smith, the United States military attache in Berlin at the time Lindbergh was decorated in 1938, has written a full account of Lindbergh's visit to Germany, the motives that prompted it, and the reasons why he could not refuse the medal. The Smith memoir was written at the request of army intelligence for historical purposes. It is now deposited at the Yale university library.

Smith states that Lindbergh undertook five missions to Germany. The first two were on behalf of American military intelligence, which utilized the trans-Atlantic flyer's prestige to get facts about the rapidly developing German air force. The last two missions were at the solicitation of the French government that Lindbergh seek Germany's approval of the sale of 450 aircraft engines to France.

The third mission, in October, 1938, was in consequence of a stratagem advanced by the American ambassador to Germany, Hugh Wilson. Wilson thought that if he could get the ear of Hermann Goering, the No. 2 man in the Hitler regime, he might be able to win support for a state department plan to ease the plight of Jews who were being persecuted and driven out of Germany in a penniless condition.

Wilson proposed to use Lindbergh as bait to attract Goering to a dinner which was part of a German air congress to which Lindbergh had been invited. Not only did Goering come to the dinner, but he took Lindbergh by

surprise by springing up and pinning on him a medal in recognition of services to aviation. Had the flyer rejected the award, he would have jeopardized what Wilson hoped might prove a successful maneuver in behalf of the German Jews. Rejection would, as Ambassador Wilson later told Lindbergh, have been "an act offensive to a guest of the ambassador of your country."

Mrs. Lindbergh, however, knew the probable cost to the flyer. After the dinner, she looked at the medal and said ruefully, "The albatross." This was a reference to the penance exacted of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. The prediction was correct. The aviator who sought to use his great influence to moderate the treatment of the Jews was denounced as anti-semitic. President Franklin Roosevelt called him a copperhead—the term applied to defeatists and those willing to traffic with the enemy during the Civil war. The lasting shame of Lindbergh's detractors is now plain for all to see.

Per 2 C.A. LINDBERGH
X Per 2 J. SMITH
X Sec 1-1
X Per 2 H. WILSON